

WAVES



ARJAN DEV MAJBOOR

Arjan Dev Majboor's poetry is marked by deftness of expression, deep introspection, progressive outlook and mature treatment. His work constitutes a muffled outcry of his bruised heart against the disappearance of old values and the disequilibrium of modern life.

From : Gems of Kashmiri Literature
by T.N. Kaul

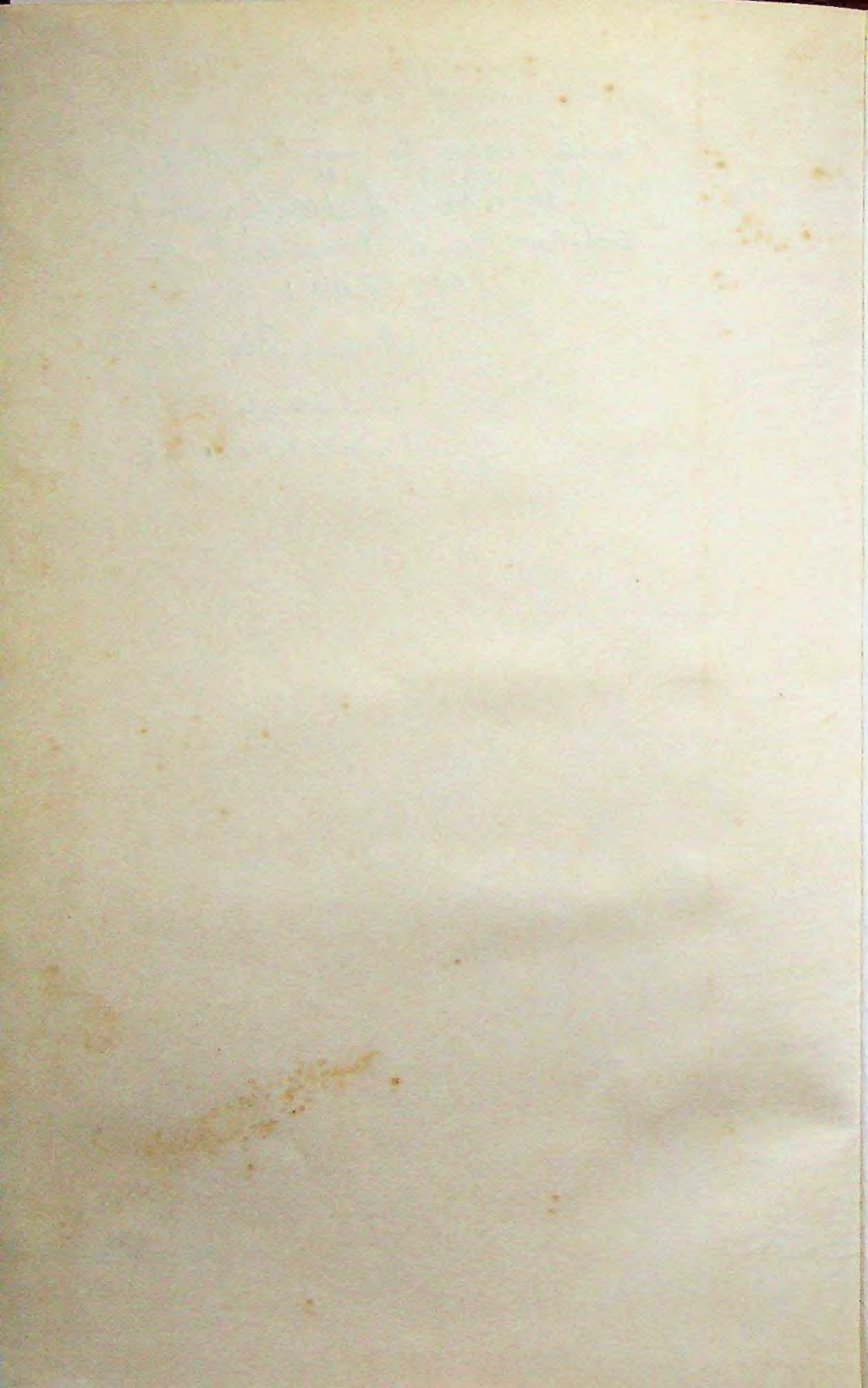
Price Rs. 125/-

(With love to my Brother
DR. R. L. SHANT.
Honoured Writer, Poet,
Editor and President of
SAMPRATI

Aryan Dewraj Bora

22.4.99

UDHAMOUR



WAVES

WYLLIES

WAVES

(Poems)

Arjan Dev Majboor

G.M. College of Education
Raipur, Bantala

Jammu

(D)

Acc. No. 480

Dated .. 4 .. 7 .. 2007

Nagraj Publications
New Delhi

Copyright © Arjan Dev Majboor

House No: 207 Ward No: 12

Udhampur 182101 (J&K)

Translated from the Kashmiri by Arvind Gigoo

Drawings and cover design by Vijay Zutshi

Printed and published by Arjan Dev Majboor

Published by : Nag Raj Publications

WZ-814, Palam, New Delhi-110 045

Year of publication : 1999

Type setting by : "Bhartiya Institute of Computer
Technology Udhampur (J&K)".

Printed by : Nice Printing Press
Delhi

Contents

A Portrait Of A Child	1
The Bronze Hand	2
The Topsy - turvy Tree	4
Snow - man	9
Fossil	10
The Painting	11
Creation	13
The Star That Fell	14
The Coming Millennium	15
The Fowl	18
The City	21
The Hungry Man	23
Lover	24
Chiselled Words	26
Secret	31
Wilderness	33
A Funeral	35
The Sign	36
A Juggler's Trick	39
Mind	40
The Dance Is On	41
Rootless	43
Prison	45
To The Swan	49

*Dedicated to
Dina Nath Nadim*

A Portrait of a Child

A portrait hung
on
the wall.
The chubby child
smiled
and
opened his Cupid mouth.
I said :
"Are you my virgin past?"

The rainbow smile vanished,
and
the thoughtful child said :
"Are you my defiled future?"

The answer reached me.

The old don't remember purity
and
children don't know defilement.

*

The Bronze Hand

The bronze hand
rests
on my heart.

Who gave it life ?

The gem-like nails
are sensuous.

Is it some damsel's hand
or
some goddess'
blessing mankind
or
a hermit's
meditating upon the word
or
Buddha's
when he spoke of Fire ?

Is it some woman's hand
caressing the earth
or
an infant's
who wept into existence ?

An endless dream
squeezed
into transience.

This wakefulness is dying now.

They say
long ago
the hand detached from the idol..

The hand blessed me
from
the ledge in the corner.
My home
——— in a shambles ———
is
my nightmare.

I recall the gem-like nails
and
the fingers
and
the palm
of the bronze hand.

*

The Topsy - turvy Tree

I saw a topsy - turvy tree.

It said :

“Sir, my roots are in the sky.

This way the world will be set right.”

I shuddered and said :

“What do you mean ?

You are a puzzle.”

The tree said :

“Be quiet.

You are a rebel.

They will imprison you.

Here truth is proscribed,

the guilty thrive,

virtue has decayed

and

morals are dead.”

I said :

“Listen !

There will be no forests.

Eagles won't fly,

they will walk.

Love will wither.

Compassion will burn

and
man,
with the snake,
will enter the cave."

The tree said :

"You are a rebel.
Don't call a day a day
or
a night a night.
Say that two suns have risen.
All are making merry.
Man is for sale."

I said :

"Mister, your roots will dry up in the hot sun."

The tree said :

"This earth will turn into a blazing inferno.
My roots don't need water."

I said :

"What shall we eat ?
Water is life."

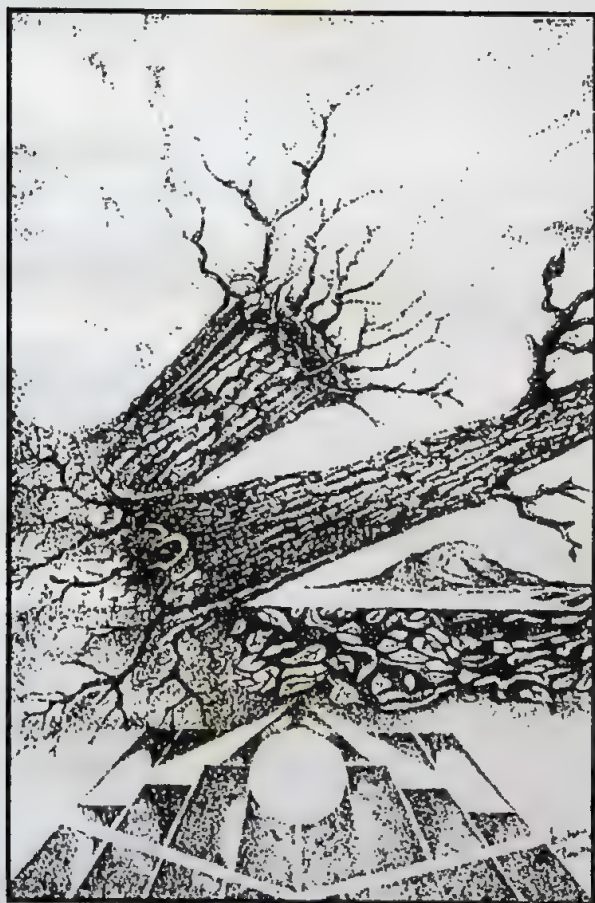
The tree said :

"Why need water
when all are mad ?
Henceforth,
flowers will bloom up in the sky,
a whirlpool will trap all,
it will rain acid,
beauty will be auctioned,
the wise will weep,

the ignorant will multiply,
greenery will disappear,
stones will cover the fields,
the lakes will become sand
and
moans will resound.

Even memory will end.”

*



THE
LIBRARY
OF THE
MUSEUM OF
COMPARATIVE ZOOLOGY
AT
HARVARD UNIVERSITY
CAMBRIDGE, MASS.



Snow - man

One winter morning
they shaped me into a snow - man.
Now I keep standing
erect
and
cold.

The red chilly is my mouth,
the charcoal pieces are my eyes,
the staff in my right hand
is
my prop.

My left hand is not empty.
Silence prevails all around.
They come and tell me :

“ Laugh
and
play
and
dance
and
walk . ”

But I melt slowly,
crack up leisurely
and
drip because of the sun.
The tendril under my feet
watches
this invisible shrinkage.

Fossil

The face is petrified,
the voice is frozen,
the yellow teeth gnash,
the veins are shrunken
and
the forehead is nailed.

The look gives a tremulous dazzle
of a buried civilization.

The true,
the good
and the beautiful
shine.

A living fossil of past ages.

*

The Painting

At night
the painter's imagination
ran amok
and
gave this picture.

The Ganges flowed down the sky
to make
wreaths of foam
and
hills of corals.

Shiva danced a laugh
and
the whole
became a cosmic laughter.

White clouds shrouded the mountain - peak.

Who dug the stream of milk
through the mountains
and
froze it for a walk ?
The earth — aglow——
played the host.
The stars,

like white doves,
formed a cluster.

An oriole called.

The painter merged into the picture.
The two became one.
The one,
in the circular collage,
is the touchstone.

*

Creation

Existence

surrounded by embers

spins

on a needle point

churning the ocean ,
sucking blood ,
swallowing the sun ,
collecting honey from a matchless flower,
gathering gems in a tempest,
looking at the dazzling light,
offering life to a smile,
playing a game with a gaze,
towing a broken boat in the lake,
cleaving one into many,
tying all tremors,
taming a lion,
stroking the dew with looks
and
weaving a garland.

*

The Star That Fell

A star in the black sky
peeped
through the window - pane.
I said :

“I am lonesome like you.
I am lonesome like a milestone.”

Everything remained unsaid.
Words travelled
but
conveyed nothing.

My eyes longed for the star
but
a lightning
burnt the black cloud.

The star fell.

My look halted.

*

The Coming Millennium

With a star on her forehead
Saraswati
riding the white -winged horse
comes
spreading celestial light.

All are afrenzy.

This wild chase
is their only hope.

Around whose head will the swan swerve ?
Who shall she bless ?
Who shall she feed with divine milk ?

The Muses are out escorting the Rider.

Peace is hers.
Knowledge is hers.
Even the Word is hers.

The image of wonders
is
in her hand.
(We call it Science.)

Suddenly she proclaims :

“Arise !
Reshape the world,
Purify it,
Burnish all Arts,
Peel off dryness,
Destroy all flaming desires.”

The world was astir.

All said :

“ The Saviour sees through the veil.”

A new world is taking birth.

Close all shops

and

listen to the call of Time.

Welcome the Rider and her band.

Thus

purity will reign,

darkness will vanish

and

fear will go

Melt all weapons

for

they kill.

The seed and the sickle and the water

are

the need.

Love

and

prevail.

Peace will flower.

Will this dream happen ?
The eternal Rider
—the new life-giver—
with a star on her forehead
is out with the Muses
to enlighten
the coming millennium.

Shall I see that birth ?

*

The Fowl

One said :

“Wonderful !

The fowl has two legs.”

Another said :

“ No , the fowl has four legs.”

The stubborn are foolish.

The third came
with a swollen head
and
a bulging belly.

He said :

“ Wrong !

You are wrong.

The fowl has only one leg.

I will continue repeating that

the fowl has only one leg

even if you don't agree.”

A cat pounced upon the fowl
and
had a hearty meal.

*





The City

A camel ran amok
in the city.

The wisest among the people said :

“ Now everybody is to himself.
I am no one to show the way.”

There were a thousand masters,
a hundred thousand rulers.

Now
in the city
each is to himself.
Those who can see
have run away.
All prattle,
they are stone-deaf.
They call this frantic blindness
freedom.

The blind believe
that they are sages.
People walk barefooted.
Shoes cap their heads.

The black will not go
if you wash up the crow.

A camel has run amok
and
the city is Babel.

*

The Hungry Man

The evening shadow fell upon
the sinful city.
There was stillness.
The street lamps shone ,
the window panes turned gold,
the frolic-lovers drank to their fill,
the kitchens brightened ,
the sellers counted coins.
The streets were deserted.

A lean man
with a sack
was searching his fate.
He picked up
rags ,
plastic pieces ,
broken spoons
and
put them in the sack.

Hunger was his lone companion.

At last
he found the Stone
and paused for a thought,
but
put the Stone into his sack
and
moved on.

Lover

I came
made sacrifice
and offered —
Coming
sacrifice
and
offering
were syllables,
breaths.

My bath in the flames was a game.

This incense is my history ,
 my being ,
 my becoming ,
 my fullness.

I am a cradle for storms.
The finale struggles
in my oceanic mind.

The solitude of beauty
is
dear
but
dearer

the search for a ray
in darkness.

Why fret ?

New twigs will sprout,
the mirror will speak,
the earth will smile,
the rising sun will watch
her dream and her dance.

*

Chiselled Words

I said :

“ I offer you words.”

They said :

“ They are useless.”

I said :

“ I sculpted them. Take them.”

They said:

“ They have lost meaning.

Give us new.”

On the street

I saw

a scarecrow laughing

at

the bent huts.

The wise hang from

paper-pegs on the walls.

From the shoulders

I shook off

noisy phantoms.

With horrid faces

they danced like mad.

I sat still
on the balcony
and
watched all.

Everything was in pell-mell.

But soon
a soft murmur
consoled me.

I snatched
the cloth,
the sunny spot
and the mirror reflecting virtue.
They are my help.

I heard a call :
“ What do you desire ?”

I said :
“ Give me words ,
the miracle of words.
Give me
the springs of love ,
the grey dawn ,
basketfuls of flowers ,
the dancing shy moon ,
fragrant colourful dusk.
They will wash the pale earth.
Light will cover the world.
I have to sweeten
stale conscience
and

light lamps in the dark meandering
streets
for
the thinking walk through them.”

Once more
I chiselled words
and
embellished them.

Then I said :

“Words, I have given you life.
Come out of the prison afresh.
Old canons don’t become you.”

*





Secret

This hidden secret is my treasure.
Why lift the veil !
Each moment
is
a dance of the mountains
Each moment
is
a torque.

The noisy world is fleeting.

The thread
———my path———
is a labyrinth,
a maze.

Time laughs a laugh.

Colour gives out fragrance.
What a miracle!

People have forgotten
that

autumn set in early.
Forgetfulness is prison for some.
The silence of the night
and
its solitude
are a hope for the morning.

This hidden secret is my treasure.
Why lift the veil!

*

Wilderness

I spent my age
writing this legend.
But the pages
leapt towards the sky.
A dusty cobweb
besieged me.

Time was at work.

The fault was not mine.

A few moments were given to me in trust.
The world maligned me.
Now
I am stranded in wilderness
waiting for
the tree ,
the water
and
the light.

I am the mosaic.

My glass-house will not crumble.
Each day

I light a lamp in the whirlwind.

I am a stage of the caravan.

Peep into me
and listen to the ancient ballad.

It is endless.

*

A Funeral

The long bright day enters into the black night.
There is a cold funeral
and
with crooked and distorted faces
the mourners squelch through the ooze.
Decay is the pilgrim.

The oily black stallions canter past.
It is a point - to - point.
I hold the reins,
I also hold the reins.
But
who pulls them ?

A lone boat
is voyaging in the panting muddy water.
The rudder is not visible
nor
the boatman.

Man has to tighten the string
and
use the plectrum
inspite of
the funerals.

*

The Sign

The old and beautiful book
masks all meaning.
The squiggly signs
hide
the essence.

They tried to know
the meaning,
they even smelled
the signs
but
what they saw
was a frightening blank.

Their dazed faces read
that
the sign is
the strength
and
wonder.

*



A Juggler's Trick

The day happened,
played upon the tabor
and
frisked away like a juggler's trick.

The hot sun cooled off,
erased my existence
and
left.

Cold night climbed down
naked and mad
with the moon on her face
and
a necklace of stars
around
her neck.

The anklets jingled.
The night stole my being
and
frisked away.

Even the night proved a juggler's trick.



Mind

With a rock heavy upon his head
he stammers :

“All will be ash.
Even the birds will not sing.”

The silver anklets have turned
black
and
mute.
People are lost in the desert
and
the sun is hidden behind the dark clouds.

The mountains will sink into the oceans ,
hay will become steel ,
water will reach the rim of the well.

My mind is mercury.
Wild!
Doesn't stop —,
doesn't even listen.

Again it jumps out of the window
to race about
in the sky.

*

The Dance is On

A swallow flew in
with the breeze
and
bathed in fire.

Words and lips
stuck

Fragrance spread over the roof.

The swallow
searched for her nest
and
finding none
trembled.

Hennaed cobbles have
illuminated civilization.
She flew away
with her desolate longings
looking back
again
and
again.
Once more dreams intoxicated her.

There
at the foot of the hill is a cottage ;
and
a full - bodied virgin,
springing like a roe,
radiates saffron hue.
The winds blow,
springs bubble
and
infinite flowers bloom.
The meadow is full.

With the two lamps in her hands
who shall she kiss ?

The dance is on.

*

Rootless

Each warm evening
wet memories
transfix my heart
and
cripple me.

Helplessness floods the room.
Objects shiver.

My existence is a knot.

Home and river and rustle
flit and pass.

Hope is hazy.

That city is a litter of
broken bricks,
burnt houses
and
choked gutters.
Their present,
our past
and
your future

fall to pieces before the gun.

The gaping wound
speaks
of broken man's
chopped fate.

*

Prison

That gaol is comfort.
Release from it means sweet home.

This gaol is torture.
It has fetters for the innocent.

Heritage has gone astray
because
the past has burnt.
Blossoms have bloomed
even in the dry sand.

In the dark cells
they still try to know ——
On the door of hell
they yearn for their yesterday.

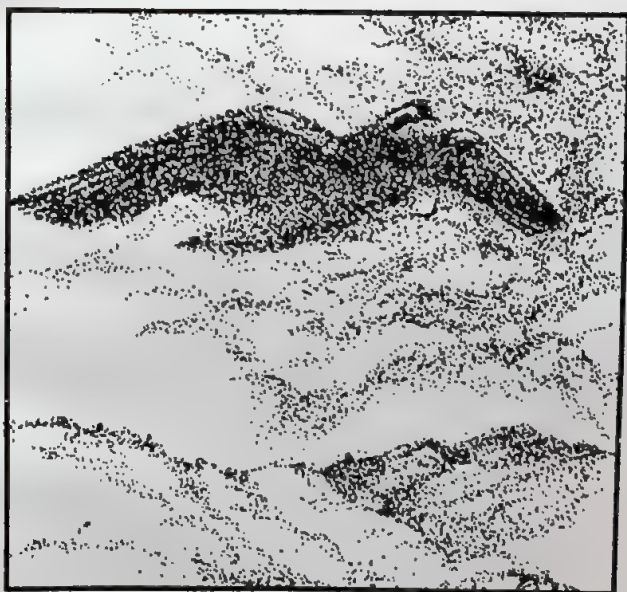
Patience breaks stones
and
tired eyes recall
the marigold
and the green leaf.

There is a crematorium
by the prison gate.

The prisoners smile.

*





TO THE SWAN

I opened my heart to the swan ,
gave him
the chariot of my liquid memories,
made him
recollect the heavenly green spot.
I wove a wreath of past events,
held a mirror of time,
showed him the scarred hush of my being.

His thoughts sped fast
and
in ecstasy
he ruffed up his wings.

Then I said :
"Yours is the infinite freedom.
Glide in the sky
and
inspect the world that was mine
once.
Fly over the mountain peaks
and
find out the source of light.
Be careful
when you see the blinding fog.

"You will face clouds
enveloping the mountain tops.
Peer through the fluffs
to find the right path.
While flying over the grasslands
and woods
don't give your throbbing heart
to a forest damsel.

Pick up the essence
from the flowers ,
dye your Self in the jungle light ,
pour love into the cup of your thought,
shower kisses upon the milky
snow.

And then
come back
with the wonder.

“Rest near a small spring
and
get at the safe airy bridges.
Sit in the crotch of a tree
and
glissade through the crevices.
The clear mountain rivulets
will
wash you a warm welcome.
Tell them :

‘This haste promises a light.
Bless me
for
the task is sublime.’

“When the night falls
shin up a fir tree
and count the holy days.
The wind will give you
blissful peace ;
juicy fruits shall be yours .
Listen to the symphony
of the trees in the forest.

Let your mind swim
in the icy water.
Nature collects silver for you.

“If you get tired
rest on the golden hay
on a hill top.
Spread your wings in the sun
and call up
your old pathways .
Your resting place will come.
You will breathe in the sweet air
away from the city.
Bliss will be yours.
From afar they will say :

‘Look !
That is a tiny bird
on the wing
or
a morning lotus in the lake ’

“ Lush greenery will enchant you.
You will hear Meaning
in the tune of the lute.
The goal is distant
but
you will reach the blooms.
Plead with the cliffs for the time
when splendour glistened ,
when glory ruled ,
when wisdom flourished ,
when strength held fast.

“ Time,
an eagle,
flies .
Catch it.
Cover the glebe with skyey love.
Don't let the colours
benumb your sense.
Gather the herbs that cure
and
burn the thistles that prick
Strut over the aerial passes
that connect mountains.
Bid fear adieu.
You will reach the goal in time.

“ Fly and hover above
the green fields.
Cuddle a longing in your lap.
The glaze of the boulders
sings a legend.
The landscape will recount
a new and fresh tale.
You will see the Full
when you unveil the mystery.
You will measure
darkness with light.

“You are my smiling innocent childhood.
Yours is my strength,
yours is my necklace of pearls.
Warm sunny days
and
cool sleeping nights are yours.
Yours is my fiery youth,

yours is my love.
You have the kernel of the Word,
you know the shape of the path.
You have seen
the flash of the moment.

“Have courage
and
dark death will not shadow you.
He
who sees all
lives.
The throne that life sits on
is a thorn.
The wise have said :
 ‘ Time is holy. Use it well.’
Decipher the words
before you speak
for
tomorrow is unborn.
Look, Noah’s Ark is caught
in a tempest.

“White clouds and the rays
will weave a shawl.
Dark clouds will flee,
the huts will take a new shape,
the walls that divide
will crumble.
Spread love over the hamlets
and
villages.
Rest their images
in your eyes.

Wish all well
and bless them.
Change the flames into flowers.

“The ocean of my remembrance
is
before you .
Choose carefully;
separate the true from the untrue;
view all
and
come back with truth.
I will deck the sanctuary for you
and
hug you at the diamond -studded gate.

“You will see infinite blossoms
and green patches.
You will feel icy winds
wash up shy bushes.
At sundown
the angels in white
descend
and
whisper honeyed truth.
Get me an image of the scene.
Get me sweet water.

“Somewhere water is ready
for a tango.
In the past
kings, courtiers and travellers
drank there.
Saints counted beads on rosaries

and
hermits meditated.
A place for all
to go into a trance.
Implore all
to restore peace in the valley,
to cure all aching wounds
and
to end grief.

“Goggle at the Seven Springs
to know
that renunciation is Reality.
The ripples will play
among the boulders.
The waters
retell the tales of the Nagas.
Piety will swill stones.
The soul of the valley is pure.

“Ancient ruins are asleep.
Awaken them
with the woeful tale.
Murmur my agony.
The mountains shine
and
the silver glitters.
The saints’ prayers
echo
from every corner
and
arouse the thinking.

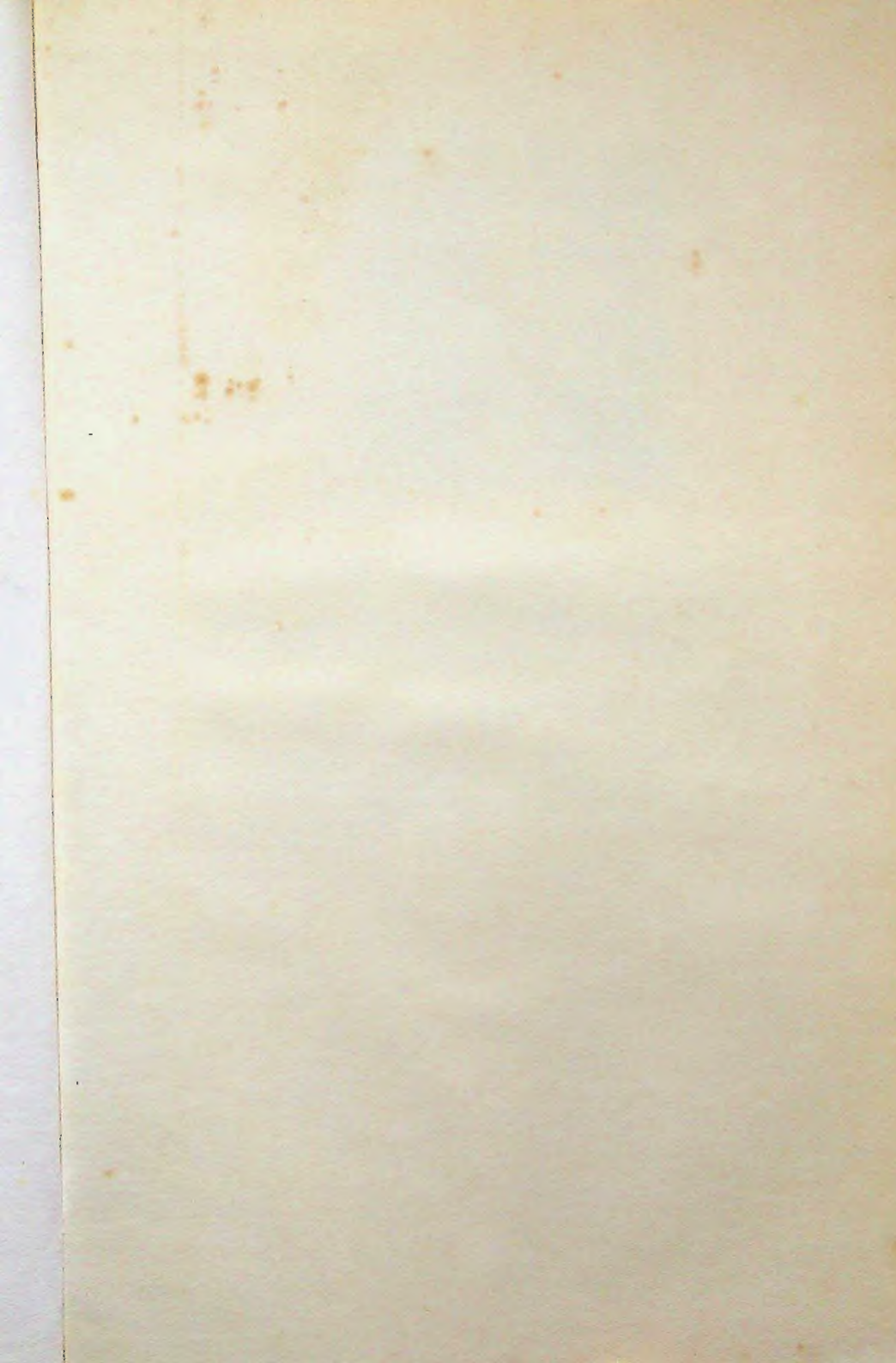
“Like a lioness in rage
Visho flounces from Kaunsarnag
Cataracts flow
from her lovely daughter.
The water will last
the long winter.
Clothed in blue
she longs for rest.
A stag capers
in a deep canyon.

“The heavenly spot on the river-bank
is nature’s work.
Springs are there
and
uplands pimpled with flowers.
You will see numberless cool shadows
and
the image of the sky.
Long ago
Janamajya made fragrant
offerings to the gods there.
Step over the spot.

Fetch me a swig of water
for
I am parched.”

(From *Teol*)

* * *





ARJAN DEV MAJBOOR (b:1924) has five anthologies of Kashmiri verse and a translation of Kalidas' *Meghdootam* to his credit. His poems, short stories, research papers and review articles have appeared in the various literary journals of the country. In 1994 the J & K Academy Of Art, Culture and Languages awarded him for his book *Paed Samyik* (Footprints of Time). Political turmoil and militancy forced him to leave Kashmir in 1990. Since then he has been staying at Udhampur in the Jammu Province.



CREATIVE BOOKS

'SHANTI' CB-24, Naraina,

New Delhi -110 028

Phone : 5698487